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PHILIP THE KING

AND OTHER POEMS

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THE DAFFODIL FIELDS

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

PHILIP THE KING

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD

WITH A PORTRAIT BY WILLIAM STRANG



LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN. 1914

TO

MY WIFE

CONTENTS

PHILIP THE KING

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

PERSONS.

Philip the Second of Spain.
His Daughter, the Infanta.
An English Prisoner.
A Spanish Captain.
Guards.

SPIRITS.

Indians.
Don John of Austria.
Escovedo.
Don Alvaro de Bazan, the Marquis of Santa Cruz.
Alonso de Leyva.

TIME.

At dawn in late September, 1588.

SCENE.

A little dark cell in Philip's palace.

PHILIP THE KING

PHILIP (*Kneeling*).

Lord, I am that Philip whom Thou hast made King of half the world. Thou knowest, Lord, how great a fleet I have fitted out to destroy the English, who work evil against Thee. Lord, I beseech Thee, keep that great Armada now, as I trust, in battle on the English coast. Protect my ships, O Lord, from fire and pestilence, from tempest and shipwreck, and in the day of battle. Amen. Amen.

Lord, now that the battle is joined, grant us Thy victory, I beseech Thee. Amen. Amen.

Lord, I beseech Thee to have in Thy special keeping my beloved friend, Alonso de Leyva, now at sea with my fleet. Guard his ways, O Lord, that so he may come safely home to me. Amen. Amen.

Lord, of Thy mercy, I beseech Thee to send to me, if it be Thy will, some word or message from my fleet, that I may know Thy will concerning it, that my weary heart may find peace. Amen. Amen.

(*He rises.*)

Enter the PRINCESS.

PRINCESS.

Has no news come?

PHILIP.

None yet.

PRINCESS.

Still nothing?

PHILIP.

No.

PRINCESS.

Two months now since they sailed, and still no word.

PHILIP.

The wind is foul; they cannot send.

PRINCESS.

I know.
And yet what tales, what rumours we have heard.
How the heart sickens for the want of news.
Is that a courier?

PHILIP.

No.

PRINCESS.

What if we lose?

PHILIP.

Why should we lose?

PRINCESS.

Because of too much pride
Planning for glory not as scripture bade

PHILIP.

I am not proud nor hopeful, nor afraid.
But you are trembling, sweet, and heavy-eyed.

PHILIP THE KING

PRINCESS.

I am afraid, for all night long
The spirit of Spain's committed wrong,
Nourished wherever a life was shed,
Stood near my bed ;
And all night long it talked to me
Of a trouble there is beyond the sea.
A trouble of war . . . I heard a horn
Blowing forlorn,
And I knew that it came from far away,
From men of Spain in a pass at bay
Blowing for help ; the beaten call
None heeds at all.
And now I fear that we have angered Him
Who makes pride dim.

PHILIP.

What we have done with our might
Cannot be hateful to God.
He speaks with dreams in the night
That the tired heart turn home
And an end of brooding come.
My heart has flushed in His praise,
The glow in my heart took sail
In a fleet that darkens the sprays ;
Sacrifice may not avail,
But the uttermost gift is wise.

PRINCESS.

Yes, I believe that; and the deed is grand—
It is a mighty blow to deal for God.
But in my ear there rings
Ill-omened words about the pride of kings—
"Pride is the evil that destroys a land."

PHILIP.

Brooding and watching waste you, you must sleep;
The hand of God will bring us through the deep.

PRINCESS.

Amen, my father, but my heart is breaking.

PHILIP.

You are too young for heart-break; let it be.

PRINCESS.

There was another fear which kept me waking:
Spain's unborn monarchs came by night to me,
Each holding fewer of the Spanish gems
Here and abroad, each weaker in the soul.
With wearier brows and dimmer diadems,
And feebler fingers giving up control,
Till, as it seemed, a hundred years from now,
An idiot child was all the might of Spain,
And English spirits beat them on the brow,
Robbing their gems and binding them with chain.

And Spain's proud flag was draggled in the sea.
And then these shapes lamented, threatening me ;
Saying that we began Spain's downfall here—
So grimly, father, that I shook with fear.

PHILIP.

Child, these are only dreams. I have learned this
Since I have been a King, that our concern
Is not with Hope nor Fear, but with what is
Which, when we follow dreams, we cannot learn.
Be patient, child ; besides, the wind has changed ;
God's will must never find our hearts estranged :
The wind is north, the news may come to-day.
Ship after ship is running down the Bay
With news ; God grant that it be happy news.

PRINCESS.

Rest till it comes, dear father.

PHILIP.

You can choose,
You who are young, whether to rest or no ;
When one is old one sees the hours go.
Dear, they go fast from withered men like me.
You were my little daughter on my knee
When first this war with England was conceived.
Now you are this . . ., it would not be believed,
And nothing done, and still time hurrying by.
We are two grey old partners—Time and I :
Look at the work we do . . . you talk of rest.

PRINCESS.

You fall your Captains in and choose the best,
And make him do the work.

PHILIP.

Ah, you're a Queen,
That is what you would do, but I am King.
Kings have no beauty to make duty keen;
They have to supervise with whip and sting.

PRINCESS.

You do not whip men; you are good and mild.

PHILIP.

Artists and Kings do what they can, my child,
Not what they would. It is not easy, dear,
Working with men, for men are only clay,
They crumble in the hand, or they betray
And time goes by, but no results appear—
Your little hands have happier work than mine.
Ah, little daughter, childhood is divine.

PRINCESS.

I am no child now that the fleet has sailed;
I was till then, but now I realize
What it would cost my father if it failed.

PHILIP.

Yes, it has cost some life, this enterprise.

PRINCESS.

But all you had to do was give the word.

PHILIP.

Ah, darling, many thousand men have heard
Orders from me since this attempt began
Seventeen years ago. Full many a man
Who helped the earliest outlines of the plot
Died at his unknown task suspecting not
What pattern his life's colour helped to weave.
Child, if I told you, you would not believe
How this idea has triumphed on unchanged
Past great commanders' deaths, past faith estranged,
Past tyranny and bloodshed and ill-hap,
Treachery striking like a thunder-clap,
Murder, betrayal, lying, past all these,
Past the grim days when feelings had to freeze
Lest the great King should drop his mask of lies
And hint his purpose to the thwarted spies,
Past half a world of men and years of thought,
Past human hope, to be the thing I sought.
Now that the dice are scattered for the stakes,
I half forget that old affront of Drake's,
By which this war with England was begun.
O child, the labour that must first be done
Before a King can act!—unending work.
All the long days of beating down the Turk,
Then when Don John had thrust the Crescent down
(You cannot know) he plotted for the crown;

Don John, my Admiral, plotted against me.
He would have sunk the English in the sea,
But since he plotted, that was ended too.
Then a great world of labour still to do,
The French to check, and then the Portuguese,
Clearing myself a pathway through the seas.
Then, when my way was clear, my Admiral died,
The Marquis Santa Cruz, the unconquered guide,
The greatest sea commander of known times.
Seventeen years of subtleties and crimes.

But it is done. I have resolved those years,
Those men, those crimes, those great attempts, those
    tears,
Sorrows and terrors of a twisted earth,
Into this fleet, this death, this Dragon's birth;
I who have never seen it, nor shall see.

PRINCESS.

I shall thank God that it was shown to me;
I saw it sail.

PHILIP.

You saw my heart's blood, child.

PRINCESS.

All a long summer day those ships defiled.
I never saw so many nor so grand;
They wandered down the tide and cleared the land,
And ranked themselves like pikemen, clump to clump.
Then in the silence came the Admiral's trump,

And from those hundreds of expectant ships,
From bells and cannonade and sailors' lips,
And from the drums and trumpets of the foot
Burst such a roaring thunder of salute
As filled my heart with wonder like a cup.
They cheered St. James's banner going up—
Golden St. James, whose figure blew out fair,
High on the flagship's mast in the blue air,
Rippling the gold. Then all the city bells,
Fired like the singing spheres some spirit impels,
Rang in the rocking belfries, the guns roared,
Each human soul there shook like tautened cord.
And to that Christian march the singing priests
Bore up the blessed banners. Even the beasts
Ramped at the challenge of that shouting crowd.
Then, as the wind came fair, the Armada bowed.
Those hundreds of great vessels, ranked in line,
Buried their bows and heaped the bubbled brine
In gleams before them. So they marched; the van,
Led by De Leyva, like slipped greyhounds, ran
To spy the English. On the right and left
By Valdes and his friend the seas were cleft;
Moncada's gallies weltered like a weir,
Flanking Recalde, bringing up the rear,
While in the midst St. James's banner marched,
Blowing towards England till the flagpole arched.
Onward they swept the sea, the flagship's side
Smoked from her cannon's hail; she took her stride,
Leaned and stretched forward.

I was conscious then
That I beheld the greatest fleet that men
Ever sent seaward; all the world was there,
All nations that begem the crown you wear,
Pikemen of Rome, whose settled pikes had stood
Stern in full many a welter of man's blood.
Cunning Levantines, armed with crooked swords,
Venetians bronzed, the ocean's overlords,
Pisans and knights of Malta, Ferrarese,
Passionate half-bloods from the Indian seas,
Hollanders, Austrians, even English, come
To bring again religion to their home;
Spain too, our Andalusians, and the hale
Iberian Basquers used to hunt the whale—
The flower of the knighthood of the world
Mustered beneath the banner you unfurled.

*   *   *   *   *

And that was but the half, for there in France
Was Parma's army ready to advance,
Death-coupled bloodhounds straining to the slip,
Waiting your navy's coming to take ship.
Father, such power awed me.

PHILIP.

Time and I
Worked for long years.

PRINCESS.

And when it had passed by
The bells were silent, and a sigh arose
Of joy in that fleet's pride, and grief for those
Who, even if all went well, had looked their last
On men and women who had made their past.
Then darkness came, and all that I could see
Was the horizon where the fleet must be—
A dimming skyline with a setting star.
It was as though they died; and now, who knows
What has befallen them, or where they are?
And night by sleepless night my trouble grows
This daily silence has been hard to bear,
But now I dread news worse.

PHILIP.

We must prepare,
Hoping the best, but ready for the worst;
But patient still, for rumour must come first—
Rumour and broken news and seamen's lies;
Patience, expecting nothing, is most wise.
If God vouchsafes it, we shall hear to-day.
Lighten your heart, my daughter.

PRINCESS.

I will pray—
Pray for a Spanish triumph.

PHILIP.

Pray for me.
Pray for God's cause adventured on the sea.

PRINCESS.

I will; God help my prayer.

PHILIP.

God help us both.
[*She goes.*

Lord, I have laboured long to keep my oath,
And since my loved one died it has been hard.
O Lord, my God, in blessed mercy guard
My only friend De Leyva, now at sea;
Keep him, O Lord, and bring him home to me.
O Lord, be Thou his bulwark and his guide;
I am so lonely since my loved one died.

How splendidly the nations hold their way,
Marching with banners through the fields of Time!
Who sees the withered King weary and grey,
Prompting it all with secret lust or crime?
Who guesses at the heavy brain behind?
I am Earth's greatest man; the world is blind.
(*He droops over his papers. Starting up*)
I have still strength, and I must read these scrolls,
Or else all goes to ruin; I must read. (*He sleeps.*)

VOICES.

Philip!

PHILIP.

Who calls?

The INDIANS *enter.*

VOICES.

We are the Indian souls,
Loosed from the gold-mines where our brothers bleed.
We swell the tale of blood: we dug you gold;
We bore your burdens till we died of thirst;
We sweated in the mines or shook with cold,
Washing the gravel which the blast had burst.
We dived for pearls until our eyeballs bled;
You burned us till we told where treasure lay.
We were your Indian slaves, but we are dead;
Our red account is cast and you must pay.

A VOICE.

Our lives paid for your fleet; you pay for us.
The unjustly killed restore the balance thus.

A VOICE.

They flung my little baby to the hounds.

A VOICE.

They took my daughter from me for their lust.

A VOICE.

Even the weak are strong beyond life's bounds;
We myriad weak add power to the thrust.

VOICES.

Philip! Philip! Philip!
We gather from over the sea
To the justice that has to be
While the blind red bull goes on.
Philip! Philip! Philip!
We who were ciphers slain
In a tale of the pride of Spain
Are a part of her glory gone.

A VOICE.

We see them where our will can help their foes.

A VOICE.

Quick, brother, quick! another galleon goes!
Waken those sleeping gunners by the fire,
Or she'll escape unracked. [*They fade away.*

PHILIP.

The voices tire.
They go. I dreamed. I slept. My heavy head
Is drowsed. What man is that?

(DON JOHN *appears, with* ESCOVEDO *behind him.*)

VOICE OF DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA.

I am the dead;
I am your brother, Philip--brother John.

PHILIP.

You corpse-fetch from the unclean grave, begone!
I had no brother.

DON JOHN.

Would you never had!

PHILIP.

You were a landmark of my father's sin,
Never my brother.

DON JOHN.

I was that bright lad,
Your father's son, my brother; I helped win
Great glory for you, Philip.

PHILIP.

I agreed
To overlook your bastardy, my friend,
So long as your bright talents served my need;
But you presumed, and so it had to end.

DON JOHN.

My talents served you well.

PHILIP.

They did, at first.

DON JOHN.

I won the Battle of Lepanto for you.

PHILIP.

And afterwards you killed my troops with thirst,
Following a crazy scheme which overbore you.

DON JOHN.

Not crazy, unsuccessful.

PHILIP.

Poor vain ghost,
Poor flickering candle that was bright awhile.

DON JOHN.

I was the man whom Europe worshipped most,
One with a mighty plan which you thought guile.
Why did you kill me, Philip?

PHILIP.

You betrayed me,
Or would have, traitor, had I not been wise.

DON JOHN.

I was your board's best piece, you should have played me,
Now I am dead and earth is in my eyes.
I could have won you England. I had planned
To conquer England. I had all prepared
Ships, soldiers, money, but your cruel hand
Killed me, and nothing's done and nothing's dared.

PHILIP.

You planned to conquer England and be King;
Those who obstruct my path I sweep aside.

DON JOHN.

Brother, there is a time for everything;
That was the time for England, but I died.
Now you attempt too late,
The powers have closed the gate,
Destiny enters by another door,
The lost chance comes no more.

THE VOICE OF ESCOVEDO.

Philip, he tells the truth. We could have won
England for you, we were no plotters then.

VOICES.

Philip, you were betrayed, you were undone.
You had the moment, but you killed the men.

ESCOVEDO.

The liar, Perez, tricked you. O great King!
We would have added England to your crown,
Now the worms cling
About our lips deep down.
You had me stabbed at midnight going home
That man of Perez' stabbed me in the back.
And then I could not stir, down on the loam;
The sky was full of blood, the stars were black.

And then I knew my wife and children waited
But that I could not come ; a moving hand
Had interposed a something fated
'Twixt us and what we planned.

DON JOHN.

You had me poisoned in that Holland den,
Outcast, alone, without the help of men.
We planned a glorious hour
Hoisting the banner of Spain
On the top of London Tower,
With England a Spanish fief.
Life cannot happen again,
And doing dies with the brain ;
Autumn ruins the flower
And after the flower the leaf.

VOICES.

Philip, Philip, Philip !
The evil men do has strength,
It gathers behind the veils
While the unjust thing prevails.
While the pride of life is strong,
But the balance tips at length,
And the unjust things are tales,
The pride of life is a song.

PHILIP.

I kept my purpose while you lived. Shall I
Be weaker, now that you are dead, you things ?

What can such reedy wretches do but die
Standing against the purposes of Kings?

DON JOHN.

Do? We can thwart you.

VOICES.

And we will, we will;
All Spain's unjustly murdered work you ill.
Gather against him, gather, mock him down.

THE VOICE OF THE MARQUIS OF SANTA CRUZ.

Scatter, you shadows, fly. Philip, great King.
You vultures gathered in an unclean ring;
Away, you shadows, scatter.
They are gone,
Philip.

The MARQUIS *enters.*

PHILIP.

Who calls?

SANTA CRUZ.

Master.

PHILIP.

Let me dream on.
Whose voice was that? It warned me of defeat.

SANTA CRUZ.

I am that Santa Cruz who built your fleet,
And died to make it good. It was my child.
I call because my work has been defiled.

PHILIP.

Why rail, uneasy soul?

SANTA CRUZ.

If I had spent
Less life in that, I should be still alive,
Commanding what I built to my content,
Driving the English slaves as conquerors drive.
Why did you give away my splendid sword,
Forged by a never-conquered captain's brain,
Into the hoof-hand of an ambling lord,
Useless in all things, but to ruin Spain?
Would God I had but guessed it! Would my stars
Had shown me clearer what my death would bring,
I would have burned those galleons, guns and spars,
Soldiers and all, and so have stopped this thing.
And doing that I should have served you well,
And brought less ruin on this lovely land.
What folly from the unfed brain of hell
Made you promote that thing to my command?—
Folly from which so many men must die.

PHILIP.

We stand against all comers, Time and I.
I chose the Duke because I wanted one . . .
Who . . .

SANTA CRUZ.

Give no reason for the evil done.
Souls wrestle from the ever deedless grave

To do, not to hear reason. On, great King,
You still may save the ruin of this thing!

PHILIP.

You speak of ruin. Tell me what you see.

SANTA CRUZ.

Ruin that threatens, but need never be.
Be silent, Philip; listen while I tell
What you must do.

PHILIP.

You are a voice from hell;
I will not listen to these obscene dreams.

SANTA CRUZ.

Life is a heavy cloud, through which come gleams.
Oh, Philip, let me speak! Philip, I say,
One way can still be tried; I see the way.
You must do this, but listen.

PHILIP.

I still doubt.

SANTA CRUZ.

Listen, great King; the light is dying out.
You are fading from me, Philip; they are coming.
Before it is too late for ever send . . .

PHILIP.

Send?

SANTA CRUZ.

Yes.

PHILIP.

To whom?

SANTA CRUZ.

To . . .

VOICES.

Drown his voice with drumming;
Pipe with the Inca conch, the Indian flute.
What red flowers spring from this blood-sprinkled root!

PHILIP.

What name was that you said?

SANTA CRUZ.

Wait, Philip—wait;
They are so many and so full of hate.

VOICES.

Call to your monarch, Marquis—call again.

PHILIP.

Something he meant is knocking at my brain—
Knocking for entrance. Marquis!

SANTA CRUZ.

Philip! King!

PHILIP.

What must I do?

SANTA CRUZ.

Oh, fiends!

VOICES.

Ah, conquerors, sing!
Now we have triumphed.
We have torn the flag.
Dance in a ring, victorious spirits, dance;
Brought to a byword is the Spanish brag,
And ruined is the grand inheritance.
Mourn, wretched Philip, for your plans are checked;
Your colonies defenceless; your sweet faith
Mocked by the heretics; your ships are wrecked;
The strength of Spain has dwindled to a wraith.
Aha! you beaten King, you blinded fool!
Scream, for the empire tumbles from your rule.

PHILIP.

God will deliver me; you are but words
Called in the night-time by malignant birds
But who are you?

The figure of DE LEYVA *enters.*

VOICE OF DE LEYVA.

I am De Leyva, come
Out of the sea, my everlasting home,
To whisper comfort to my ruined friend.
Dear, I am dead, but friendship cannot end;
Love does not die, and I am with you here.
Often in sorrow you will feel me near,

Feel me, but never speak, nor hear me speak.
Philip, whatever bitter Fate may wreak
On Spain and you, remember I am here,
The dead are bound to those they held most dear.

PHILIP.

Dreams of the night. I dreamed De Leyva came.

VOICES.

Awake to hear the story of your shame.
(*They cry. A gun is shot off. Bells.*)

PHILIP.

(*Rousing.*) I dreamed I was defeated like those men
Whom I defeated; I have felt their woe.
What is this noise? A message?
Enter then.

PRINCESS.

A prisoner comes with news of victory.

PHILIP.

So.
Victory comes! We win!

PRINCESS.

The fleet has won!

PHILIP.

Thanks be to God on high.

PRINCESS.

His will be done.

PHILIP.

Lord, help me use this victory for Thy praise.
Lord, Thou hast burst this night of many days
With glorious morning and my heart is full.
O God, my God, Thy ways are wonderful!
Bring me the prisoner.

PRINCESS.

He brought this letter.

An Englishman is brought in.

PHILIP.

You are an Englishman?

PRISONER.

Yes, your Majesty.

PHILIP.

This letter says that you can tell me how things have fared. Tell me your story.

PRISONER.

I was at sea, my lord, fishing, some fifteen miles south-west from Falmouth. We were not expecting the Spanish fleet, our cruisers had said it was not coming. It was hazy summer weather and early morning. We could hear that we were among a big fleet, and when the haze lifted your ships were all

round us, so we were taken aboard an admiral's ship. A dark man the admiral was, with a very quick way; he was not the chief admiral, but an Admiral Recalde, with the rearguard.

PHILIP.

Where was the English fleet at that time? Was it expecting us?

PRISONER.

No, your honour. It was windbound in Plymouth, unprepared, as I told your admiral. Then I was taken down below.

PHILIP.

Did our fleet enter Plymouth, then?

PRISONER.

No, my lord, and I could not think why, for the wind held and they had only to sail straight in. The day passed.

The next day there was firing, and I thought "the English have got out of the trap at least," but the firing died down, and I concluded the English were beaten.

PHILIP.

Yes?

PRISONER.

I thought the ships would put ashore then to take what they had won, but they kept at sea some days, though there was firing every day, sometimes very

heavy. They said they were burning all the English towns as they passed, and then going to France to fetch an army; and after some nights I was brought ashore in Calais to come to your Majesty.

PHILIP.

What did you see in Calais?

PRISONER.

It was dark night, my lord, when they sent me in. I saw the road full of shipping, lit up like a town.

PHILIP.

What was the feeling among you English prisoners? That the Spaniards had prospered?

PRISONER.

Yes, my lord. You had reached your army, which was all your intent. You had only to take it across the Channel; the wind was fair for that.

PHILIP.

So then you started for Spain. You know no more of what happened?

PRISONER.

No, my lord, except that looking back from a hilltop, I saw a great glare over Calais.

PHILIP.

Something was burning there?

PRISONER.

It was the bonfires, my lord, to give them light; they were embarking the army. Then in France later on we heard that Drake had been sunk off Calais with fifteen ships. A man said he had seen it. That is all I know, my lord.

PHILIP.

What you say will be proved. You will be returned to England. Treat this man well. [*Exit* PRISONER.

PRINCESS

Father, what blessed news!

PHILIP.

We have not failed;
But then he hardly knew. The letter here
Shows that our navy partly has prevailed.

PRINCESS.

The news has spread.

CRIES WITHOUT.

Long live King Philip! Cheer!

CRIES.

Cheer our great King! Long live our noble King.
Beat "Santiago," drummers.

PRINCESS.

Hark! they sing.
The court is dark with people, but more come.

CRIES.

Long live King Philip!

A GREAT VOICE.

Silence for the drum!
And when the drum beats, we will lift our thanks
Till his heart triumphs.
Silence in the ranks!
Eyes front! O people, listen! Our attempt
Has triumphed more than our desires dreamt.
England is ours. Give thanks. Sound trumpets.
Sing!

CRIES.

Philip, Philip the King! God save the King!
Philip the conqueror! Philip! (*A strange cry.*)

PRINCESS.

Oh, look! look! . . .
Just as they cheered, the palace banners shook,
They took it for a sign.
The guards are there,
Look, and the monks are forming in the square
Bringing the blessed relics. Oh, my dear!
I am so happy. Listen how they cheer.

Father, they're cheering because Spain has won.
All you have hoped and striven for is done.
I hardly dare believe it.

CRIES.

Long live Spain.

PRINCESS.

O, there are horsemen, I must look again!

CRIES.

There is the Princess at the window. See?
God save you, little lady. Which is she?
There. Is the King there? No. He must be. Yes.
God save your Grace. He's there with the Princess.

PHILIP.

Stand farther back; they saw you.

PRINCESS.

Oh, not now!
They called 'God save me,' father; let me bow.

PHILIP.

Bow, then, my dear.

CRIES.

God save your pretty face.

PRINCESS.

Father, do come, they want you.

CRIES.

Bless your Grace.
God save the King—King Philip.

PRINCESS.

Father dear,
They're calling for you; stand beside me here.

PHILIP.

Not yet. It is not time.

CRIES.

Philip the King!

PRINCESS.

Oh, father, come! It is a thrilling thing
To know they won, and hear these shouts of praise.

CRIES.

God save the King! God send him many days!
Philip the King, the conqueror of the sea!
St. James for Spain, King Philip, victory!
King Philip! Santiago!

PRINCESS.

Father.

PHILIP.

Wait!
Kings must not yield them at too cheap a rate.

VOICES.

Philip the King! The English are destroyed!
God save him! Victory! We are overjoyed!
Let the bells ring! King Philip! Philip! King!
Ring the Cathedral bells—ay, let them ring!
St. James for Spain! King Philip! Clear the guns!
(*Guns shot off.*)
King Philip, fire—fire all at once!
King Philip, fire! King Philip, fire! St. James!
Thank God, the King of kings, the Name of names!
Fire, King Philip! Santiago, fire!
Give thanks to God who gives us our desire!
Philip, God save and bless him!

PHILIP (*going to window*).

I will speak.

VOICES.

Fire! He's there! King Philip!

PHILIP.

Man is weak.

VOICES.

He's there!

PRINCESS.

Oh, father, look!

PHILIP.

Stand at my side

VOICES.

God bless and guard our blessed country's guide!
King Philip, fire! The King! (*The bells begin.*)

PHILIP THE KING

PRINCESS.

Oh, bells of joy!
And now the monks are singing.

THE MONKS.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord of lords,
Who saves His faithful from the Egyptian swords.

VOICES.

Amen. God save the King!

THE MONKS.

He made the Red Sea waters to divide,
And led our Israel through with Him for guide.

VOICES.

Amen. God save the King! Philip the King!

PHILIP.

O God, I thank Thee for this marvellous thing.

THE MONKS.

He whelmed King Pharaoh's army in the sea,
And of His mercy gave us victory.

VOICES.

The famous kings are blown like chaff
Before Thy fiery car.
Thou smit'st th' ungodly with Thy staff . . .
Philip the King! God save our prudent King!

PHILIP.

My subjects, whom God gave me for His ends . . .

PRINCESS.

Whatever pain you bore, this makes amends.

VOICES.

Speak to your loving hearts, your Majesty.

PHILIP.

I do His will; to God the glory be.

THE MONKS.

Praise Him, O sun and moon, morning and evening
star!
The kings who mocked His word are broken in the
war.
Praise Him with heart and soul! Praise Him with
voice and lute!

VOICES.

The King! God save the King! Silence! He speaks.
Salute!

THE MONKS.

In the dark night, ere dawn, we will arise and sing
Glory to God on high, the praises of our King.

VOICES.

The King is going to speak. He makes a sign.
God bless your noble Grace and all your line!

God bless you, Sir, for all your thought for us!
The conquering King, Philip victorious!
Philip the great and good! Hush! Silence! Peace!
Philip! Attention! Bid the ringers cease.
The King is going to speak; he raised his hand.

PRINCESS.

Dear, to be loved as you are is most grand.
Speak to them, father; thank them for their love.

THE MONKS.

I will exalt the Name of God above.

VOICES.

The bells are hushed. Be quiet! Silence all!

PHILIP.

I thought I heard, far off, a funeral call;
As in your dream, a melancholy cry.

PRINCESS.

It was the fifes.

PHILIP.

No; listen!

PRINCESS.

That sound?

PHILIP.

Ay.

PRINCESS.

It was the crowd outside. Now they are still.

PHILIP.

No; it was singing coming up the hill—
Sad singing, too.

PRINCESS.

I did not hear it.

PHILIP.

There!

PRINCESS.

The bells have left a trembling in the air.

PHILIP.

No; it was voices. I will speak one word
To these below. There is the noise I heard.

(RECALDE'S *men are heard singing.*)

RECALDE'S MEN.

Out of the deep, out of the deep, we come,
Preserved from death at sea to die at home.
Mercy of God alone preserved us thus;
In the waste sea Death laid his hand on us.

PRINCESS.

The Black Monks in a penitential psalm.

VOICES.

Philip the King!

PHILIP.

I'll wait.

PRINCESS.

Oh, speak!

PHILIP.

Be calm!
I cannot cross God's word with words of mine.

VOICES.

Quiet, you singers!

PRINCESS.

They are men in line.
(RECALDE'S *men are heard singing.*

RECALDE'S MEN.

We called the world too small with boastful lips;
Now we are ghosts crawled from the bones of ships.
We were most glorious at our setting sail;
Now our knees knock, our broken spirits fail.
Our banner is abased and all our pride:
A tale of ships that sank and men who died.

PRINCESS.

Listen! Who are they?

PHILIP.

What is it they sing?

VOICES.

The King is speaking. Silence for the King!
Let the King speak; be still. You ragged crew,
Have you no manners? Silence! Who are you?

RECALDE'S MEN.

We are the beaten men, the men accursed,
Whose bitter glory 'tis t' have borne the worst.

PRINCESS.

They are not monks.

PHILIP.

Nor beggars.

PRINCESS.

Now they stand.

VOICES.

Yon navy's sweepings driven back to land.
Go to the hens and tunnies; beat them down
Back to the sea you ran from; back and drown.

RECALDE'S MEN.

Pity our shame, you untried heroes here.
Defeat's not victory, but 'tis bought as dear.

PHILIP.

They are sailors from the fleet.

PRINCESS.

They come with news
They are ragged to the skin, they have no shoes.

PHILIP.

The crowd is still.

PRINCESS.

Why do they come like this?

PHILIP.

Listen; their Captain tells them what it is

RECALDE'S MEN.

Darken the bedrooms for us, people all,
And let us turn our faces to the wall,
And let the darkness and the silence make
A quiet time in which our hearts may break.

(*A murmur runs through the Court.*)

PRINCESS.

Father, what is it?

PHILIP.

Child, the Act of One
Who chastens earthly kings, whose Will be done.

PRINCESS.

It means that we are beaten?

PHILIP.

Who can tell?

PRINCESS.

Father.

PHILIP.

Dear child, even defeat is well

PRINCESS.

I thought that we were happy.

PHILIP.

Watch the square.
Now tell me calmly what is passing there.

PRINCESS.

The Captain comes, the crowd is making way.

PHILIP.

Who is it? Can you see?

PRINCESS.

His hair is grey.
He walks bareheaded, slowly, and the crowd
Shrink as though Death were passing in his shroud.

PHILIP.

Worse news has come. Who is the man?

PRINCESS.

His face . . .
I seem to know him, but the air is strange.
He puts the touch of Death upon the place.
Nothing but Death could fashion such a change.
He carries something. Now the people kneel.
We are defeated, Father.

PHILIP.

What I feel
I cover. Go within. Misfortune stuns
None but the tender. [*Exit* PRINCESS.

VOICES.

Give us back our sons.
Philip, give back our sons, our lovely sons.

THE PALACE GUARD.

Halt! Who comes there?

A VOICE.

Spain and the Empire.

THE GUARD.

Pass,
Spain and the Empire.

VOICES.

They are drowned. Alas!
Philip, give back our sons, our lovely sons.

Enter MESSENGER, *carrying an Admiral's chain.*

PHILIP.

What brings you to me, Captain?

MESSENGER.

This gold chain . . .
Bears the twelve badges of the strength of Spain
Once linked in glory, Philip, but now loosed.
(*Detaching link from link.*)
Castilla, Leon, Aragon, and these,
Palestine, Portugal, the Sicilies,

Navarre, Granada, the Valencian State,
The Indies, East and West, the Archducate,
The Western Mainland in the Ocean Sea.
Those who upheld their strength have ceased to be.
I, who am dying, King, have seen their graves.
Philip, your Navy is beneath the waves.

PHILIP.

He who in bounty gives in wisdom takes.

MESSENGER.

O King, forgive me, for my spirit breaks;
I saw those beaches where the Grange descends
White with unburied corpses of stripped friends.

PHILIP.

I grieve that Spain's disaster brings such loss.

MESSENGER.

From Pentland to the Groyne the tempests toss
Unshriven Spaniards driving with the tide.
They were my lovely friends and they have died,
Far from wind-broken Biscay, far from home,
With no anointing chrism but the foam.

PHILIP.

The dead will rise from unsuspected slime;
God's chosen will be gathered in God's time.

PHILIP THE KING

MESSENGER.

King, they died helpless; our unwieldy fleet
Made such a target to the English guns
That we were riddled through like sifted wheat.
We never came to grappling with them once.
They raked us from a distance, and then ran.
Each village throughout Spain has lost a man;
The widows in the seaports fill the streets.

PHILIP.

Uncertain chance decides the fate of fleets.

MESSENGER.

Now the North Sea is haunted for all time
By miserable souls whose dying words
Cursed the too proud adventure as a crime.
Our broken galleons house the gannet-birds.
The Irish burn our Captain's bones for lime.
O misery that the might of England wrought!

PHILIP.

Christ is the only remedy for thought
When the mind sickens. We are pieces played,
Not moving as we will, but as we are made;
Beaten and spurred at times like stubborn steeds,
That we may go God's way. Your spirit bleeds,
Having been proved in trouble past her strength.
Give me the roll in all its ghastly length.
Which of my friends survive, if any live?

MESSENGER.

Some have survived, but all are fugitive.
Your Admiral in command is living still;
Michæl Oquendo too, though he is ill,
Dying of broken heart and bitter shame.
Valdes is prisoner, Manrique the same.

PHILIP.

God willed the matter; they are not to blame.
Thank God that they are living. Name the rest.

MESSENGER.

They are all dead . . . with him you loved the best.

PHILIP.

I dreamed De Leyva died, so it is true?

MESSENGER.

Drowned on the Irish coast with all his crew.
After enduring dying many days
The sea has given him quiet. Many ways
Lead men to death, and he a hard one trod,
Bearing much misery, like a knight of God.

PHILIP.

Amen. Go on.

MESSENGER.

Hugh de Monçada died,
Shot in his burning ship by Calais side,

Cheering his men to save her. Pimentel
Sank in a galleon shambled like a hell
Rather than yield, and in a whirl of flames
Pedro Mendoza, Captain of St. James,
Stood with Don Philip thrusting boarders back
Till their Toledan armour was burnt black,
And both their helms ran blood. And there they fell,
Shot down to bleed to death. They perished well,
Happy to die in battle for their King
Before defeat had fallen on their friends;
Happier than most, for where the merrows sing
Paredes and his brother met their ends,
And Don Alarcon, cast alive ashore,
Was killed and stripped and hanged upon a tree.
And young Mendoza, whom the flagship bore,
Died of starvation and of misery.
But hundreds perished, King; why mention these?
Battle and hunger, heart-break, and the seas
Have overwhelmed the chivalry of Spain.

PHILIP.

Misfortune, after effort, brings no stain.
Perhaps I underjudged the English fleet.
How was it that the Spaniards met defeat?
What evil fortune brought about our fall?

MESSENGER.

Their sailors and their cannon did it all.

PHILIP.

Yet when the fleet reached Calais all went well.

MESSENGER.

Our woes began there.

PHILIP.

Tell me what befell.

MESSENGER.

We were to ship the troops in Calais Road;
They lay encamped, prepared to go aboard.
To windward still the English fleet abode—
Still as in port when peace has been restored.

The wind and sea were fair,
We lay at anchor there;
The stars burned in the air,
The men were sleeping,
When in the midnight dark
Our watchman saw a spark
Suddenly light a bark
With long flames leaping.

Then, as they stood amazed,
Others and others blazed;
Then terror set them crazed,
They ran down screaming:
"Fire-ships are coming! Wake
Cast loose, for Jesus' sake!
Eight fire-ships come from Drake—
Look at their gleaming!"

PHILIP THE KING

Roused in the dark from bed,
We saw the fire show red,
And instant panic spread
Through troops and sailors;
They swarmed on deck unclad,
They did what terror bade,
King, they were like the mad
Escaped from jailers.

Some prayed for mercy, some
Rang bells or beat the drum,
As though despair had come
At hell's contriving;
Captains with terror pale
Screamed through the dark their hail,
"Cut cable, loose the sail,
And set all driving!"

Heading all ways at once,
Grinding each other's guns,
Our blundering galleons
Athwart-hawse galleys,
Timbers and plankings cleft,
And half our tackling reft,
Your grand Armada left
The roads of Calais.

Weary and overwrought
We strove to make all taut;

But when the morning brought
The dawn to light us,
Drake, with the weather gage,
Made signal to engage,
And, like a pard in rage,
Bore down to fight us

Nobly the English line
Trampled the bubbled brine;
We heard the gun-trucks whine
To the taut laniard.
Onwards we saw them forge,
White billowing at the gorge.
"On, on!" they cried, "St. George!
Down with the Spaniard!"

From their van squadron broke
A withering battle-stroke,
Tearing our plankèd oak
By straiks asunder,
Blasting the wood like rot
With such a hail of shot,
So constant and so hot
It beat us under.

The English would not close;
They fought us as they chose,
Dealing us deadly blows
For seven hours.

PHILIP THE KING

Lords of our chiefest rank
The bitter billow drank,
For there the English sank
Three ships of ours.

*   *   *   *   *

Then the wind forced us northward from the fight;
We could not ship the army nor return;
We held the sea in trouble through the night,
Watching the English signals blink and burn.
The English in a dim cloud kept astern;
All night they signalled, while our shattered ships
Huddled like beasts beneath the drovers' whips.

*   *   *   *   *

At dawn the same wind held; we could not strive.
The English drove us north as herdsmen drive.

*   *   *   *   *

Under our tattered flags,
With rigging cut to rags,
Our ships like stricken stags
Were heaped and hounded.
Caught by the unknown tide,
With neither chart nor guide,
We fouled the Holland side,
Where four more grounded.

Our water-casks were burst,
The horses died of thirst,
The wounded raved and curst,
Uncared, untended.

PHILIP THE KING

All night we heard the crying
Of lonely shipmates dying;
We had to leave them lying.
So the fight ended.

PHILIP.

God gives His victory as He wills. But this
Was not complete destruction. What thing worse
Came to destroy you?

MESSENGER.

An avenging curse,
Due for old sins, destroyed us.

PHILIP.

Tell the tale.

MESSENGER.

O King, when morning dawned it blew a gale,
But still the English followed, and we fled
Till breakers made the dirty waters pale.
We saw the Zealand sandbanks right ahead,
Blind in a whirling spray that gave us dread;
For we were blown there, and the water shoaled.
The crying of the leadsmen at the lead,
Calling the soundings, were our death-bells tolled.

We drifted down to death upon the sands—
The English drew away to watch us drown;
We saw the bitter breakers with grey hands
Tear the dead body of the sandbank brown.

PHILIP THE KING

We could do nothing, so we drifted down
Singing the psalms for death—we who had been
Lords of the sea and knights of great renown,
Doomed to be strangled by a death unclean.

PHILIP.

So there the ships were wrecked?

MESSENGER.

Time had not struck.
O King, we learned how blessed mercy saves:
Even as our forefoot grounded on the muck,
Tripping us up to drown us in the waves,
A sudden windshift snatched us from our graves
And drove us north; and now another woe,
Tempest unending, beat our ships to staves—
A never-dying gale with frost and snow.

Now our hearts failed, for food and water failed;
The men fell sick by troops, the wounded died.
They washed about the wet decks as we sailed
For want of strength to lift them overside.
Desolate seas we sailed, so grim, so wide,
That ship by ship our comrades disappeared.
With neither sun nor star to be a guide,
Like spirits of the wretched dead we steered.

Till, having beaten through the Pentland Pass,
We saw the Irish surf, with mists of spray

Blowing far inland, blasting trees and grass,
And gave God thanks, for we espied a bay
Safe, with bright water running down the clay—
A running brook where we could drink and drink.
But drawing near, our ships were cast away,
Bilged on the rocks; we saw our comrades sink . . .

Or worse: for those the breakers cast ashore
The Irish killed and stripped; their bodies white
Lay naked to the wolves—yea, sixty score—
All down the windy beach, a piteous sight.
The savage Irish watched by bonfire light
Lest more should come ashore; we heard them there
Screaming the bloody news of their delight.
Then we abandoned hope and new despair.

And now the fleet is sunken in the sea,
And all the seamen, all the might of Spain,
Are dead, O King, and out of misery,
Never to drag at frozen ropes again—
Never to know defeat, nor feel the pain
Of watching dear companions sink and die.
Death's everlasting armistice to the brain
Gives their poor griefs quietus; let them lie.

I, like a ghost returning from the grave,
Come from a stricken ship to tell the news
Of Spanish honour which we could not save,
Nor win again, nor even die to lose;

And since God's hidden wisdom loves to bruise
Those whom He loves, we, trembling in despair,
Will watch our griefs to see God's finger there,
And make His will our solace and excuse.

Defeat is bitter and the truth is hard—
Spain is defeated, England has prevailed ;
This is the banner which I could not guard,
And this the consecrated sword which failed.
Do with your dying Captain as you will.

(*He lays down sword and banner.*)

PHILIP.

I, from my heart, thank God, from whose great hand
I am so helped with power, I can still
Set out another fleet against that land.
Nor do I think it ill
If all the running water takes its course
While there are unspent fountains at the source.

He sendeth out His word and melteth them.
Take back your standard, Captain. As you go,
Bid the bells toll and let the clergy come.
Then in the city by the strike of drum
Proclaim a general fast. In bitter days
The soul finds God, God us.

[*Exit Captain.*

PHILIP (*alone*).

De Leyva, friend,
Whom I shall never see, never again,
This misery that I feel is over Spain.
O God, beloved God, in pity send
That blessed rose among the thorns—an end :
Give a bruised spirit peace.

(*He kneels. A muffled march of the drums.*)

CURTAIN.

OTHER POEMS

TRUTH

MAN with his burning soul
Has but an hour of breath
To build a ship of truth
In which his soul may sail—
Sail on the sea of death,
For death takes toll
Of beauty, courage, youth,
Of all but truth.

Life's city ways are dark,
Men mutter by ; the wells
Of the great waters moan.
O death ! O sea ! O tide !
The waters moan like bells ;
No light, no mark,
The soul goes out alone
On seas unknown.

Stripped of all purple robes,
Stripped of all golden lies,
I will not be afraid,
Truth will preserve through death.

TRUTH

Perhaps the stars will rise—
The stars like globes ;
The ship my striving made
May see night fade.

THE "WANDERER"

All day they loitered by the resting ships,
Telling their beauties over, taking stock;
At night the verdict left my messmates' lips,
"The *Wanderer* is the finest ship in dock."

I had not seen her, but a friend, since drowned,
Drew her, with painted ports, low, lovely, lean,
Saying, "The *Wanderer*, clipper, outward bound,
The loveliest ship my eyes have ever seen—

"Perhaps to-morrow you will see her sail.
She sails at sunrise": but the morrow showed
No *Wanderer* setting forth for me to hail;
Far down the stream men pointed where she rode,

Rode the great trackway to the sea, dim, dim,
Already gone before the stars were gone.
I saw her at the sea-line's smoky rim
Grow swiftly vaguer as they towed her on.

Soon even her masts were hidden in the haze
Beyond the city; she was on her course
To trample billows for a hundred days;
That afternoon the norther gathered force,

THE "WANDERER"

Blowing a small snow from a point of east.
"Oh, fair for her," we said, "to take her south."
And in our spirits, as the wind increased,
We saw her there, beyond the river mouth,

Setting her side-lights in the wildering dark,
To glint upon mad water, while the gale
Roared like a battle, snapping like a shark,
And drunken seamen struggled with the sail.

While with sick hearts her mates put out of mind
Their little children left astern, ashore,
And the gale's gathering made the darkness blind,
Water and air one intermingled roar.

Then we forgot her, for the fiddlers played,
Dancing and singing held our merry crew;
The old ship moaned a little as she swayed.
It blew all night, oh, bitter hard it blew!

So that at midnight I was called on deck
To keep an anchor-watch: I heard the sea
Roar past in white procession filled with wreck;
Intense bright frosty stars burned over me,

And the Greek brig beside us dipped and dipped,
White to the muzzle like a half-tide rock,
Drowned to the mainmast with the seas she shipped;
Her cable-swivels clanged at every shock.

THE "WANDERER"

And like a never-dying force, the wind
Roared till we shouted with it, roared until
Its vast vitality of wrath was thinned,
Had beat its fury breathless and was still.

By dawn the gale had dwindled into flaw,
A glorious morning followed: with my friend
I climbed the fo'c's'le-head to see; we saw
The waters hurrying shorewards without end.

Haze blotted out the river's lowest reach;
Out of the gloom the steamers, passing by,
Called with their sirens, hooting their sea-speech;
Out of the dimness others made reply.

And as we watched, there came a rush of feet
Charging the fo'c's'le till the hatchway shook.
Men all about us thrust their way, or beat,
Crying, "The *Wanderer!* Down the river! Look!"

I looked with them towards the dimness; there
Gleamed like a spirit striding out of night,
A full-rigged ship unutterably fair,
Her masts like trees in winter, frosty-bright.

Foam trembled at her bows like wisps of wool;
She trembled as she towed. I had not dreamed
That work of man could be so beautiful,
In its own presence and in what it seemed.

THE "WANDERER"

"So, she is putting back again," I said.
"How white with frost her yards are on the fore."
One of the men about me answer made,
"That is not frost, but all her sails are tore,

"Torn into tatters, youngster, in the gale;
Her best foul-weather suit gone." It was true,
Her masts were white with rags of tattered sail
Many as gannets when the fish are due.

Beauty in desolation was her pride,
Her crowned array a glory that had been;
She faltered tow'rds us like a swan that died,
But although ruined she was still a queen.

"Put back with all her sails gone," went the word;
Then, from her signals flying, rumour ran,
"The sea that stove her boats in killed her third;
She has been gutted and has lost a man."

So, as though stepping to a funeral march,
She passed defeated homewards whence she came
Ragged with tattered canvas white as starch,
A wild bird that misfortune had made tame.

She was refitted soon: another took
The dead man's office; then the singers hove
Her capstan till the snapping hawsers shook;
Out, with a bubble at her bows, she drove.

THE "WANDERER"

Again they towed her seawards, and again
We, watching, praised her beauty, praised her trim,
Saw her fair house-flag flutter at the main,
And slowly saunter seawards, dwindling dim;

And wished her well, and wondered, as she died,
How, when her canvas had been sheeted home,
Her quivering length would sweep into her stride,
Making the greenness milky with her foam.

But when we rose next morning, we discerned
Her beauty once again a shattered thing;
Towing to dock the *Wanderer* returned,
A wounded sea-bird with a broken wing.

A spar was gone, her rigging's disarray
Told of a worse disaster than the last;
Like draggled hair dishevelled hung the stay,
Drooping and beating on the broken mast.

Half-mast upon her flagstaff hung her flag;
Word went among us how the broken spar
Had gored her captain like an angry stag,
And killed her mate a half-day from the bar.

She passed to dock upon the top of flood.
An old man near me shook his head and swore:
"Like a bad woman, she has tasted blood—
There'll be no trusting in her any more."

THE "WANDERER"

We thought it truth, and when we saw her there
Lying in dock, beyond, across the stream,
We would forget that we had called her fair,
We thought her murderess and the past a dream.

And when she sailed again, we watched in awe,
Wondering what bloody act her beauty planned,
What evil lurked behind the thing we saw,
What strength was there that thus annulled man's
hand,

How next its triumph would compel man's will
Into compliance with external Fate,
How next the powers would use her to work ill
On suffering men: we had not long to wait.

For soon the outcry of derision rose,
"Here comes the *Wanderer!*" the expected cry.
Guessing the cause, our mockings joined with those
Yelled from the shipping as they towed her by.

She passed us close, her seamen paid no heed
To what was called: they stood, a sullen group,
Smoking and spitting, careless of her need,
Mocking the orders given from the poop.

Her mates and boys were working her; we stared.
What was the reason of this strange return,
This third annulling of the thing prepared?
No outward evil could our eyes discern.

THE "WANDERER"

Only like one who having formed a plan
Beyond the pitch of common minds, she sailed,
Mocked and deserted by the common man,
Made half divine to me for having failed.

We learned the reason soon; below the town
A stay had parted like a snapping reed,
"Warning," the men thought, "not to take her
down."
They took the omen, they would not proceed.

Days passed before another crew would sign.
The *Wanderer* lay in dock alone, unmanned,
Feared as a thing possessed by powers malign,
Bound under curses not to leave the land.

But under passing Time fear passes too;
That terror passed, the sailors' hearts grew bold.
We learned in time that she had found a crew
And was bound out and southwards as of old.

And in contempt we thought, "A little while
Will bring her back again, dismantled, spoiled.
It is herself; she cannot change her style;
She has the habit now of being foiled."

So when a ship appeared among the haze,
We thought, "The *Wanderer* back again"; but no,
No *Wanderer* showed for many, many days,
Her passing lights made other waters glow.

THE "WANDERER"

But we would often think and talk of her,
Tell newer hands her story, wondering, then,
Upon what ocean she was *Wanderer*,
Bound to the cities built by foreign men.

And one by one our little conclave thinned,
Passed into ships and sailed and so away,
To drown in some great roaring of the wind,
Wanderers themselves, unhappy fortune's prey.

And Time went by me making memory dim,
Yet still I wondered if the *Wanderer* fared
Still pointing to the unreached ocean's rim,
Brightening the water where her breast was bared.

And much in ports abroad I eyed the ships,
Hoping to see her well-remembered form
Come with a curl of bubbles at her lips
Bright to her berth, the sovereign of the storm.

I never did, and many years went by,
Then, near a Southern port, one Christmas Eve,
I watched a gale go roaring through the sky,
Making the caldrons of the clouds upheave.

Then the wrack tattered and the stars appeared,
Millions of stars that seemed to speak in fire;
A byre cock cried aloud that morning neared,
The swinging wind-vane flashed upon the spire.

THE "WANDERER"

And soon men looked upon a glittering earth,
Intensely sparkling like a world new-born;
Only to look was spiritual birth,
So bright the raindrops ran along the thorn.

So bright they were, that one could almost pass
Beyond their twinkling to the source, and know
The glory pushing in the blade of grass,
That hidden soul which makes the flowers grow.

That soul was there apparent, not revealed,
Unearthly meanings covered every tree,
That wet grass grew in an immortal field,
Those waters fed some never-wrinkled sea.

The scarlet berries in the hedge stood out
Like revelations but the tongue unknown;
Even in the brooks a joy was quick: the trout
Rushed in a dumbness dumb to me alone.

All of the valley was aloud with brooks;
I walked the morning, breasting up the fells,
Taking again lost childhood from the rooks,
Whose cawing came above the Christmas bells.

I had not walked that glittering world before,
But up the hill a prompting came to me,
"This line of upland runs along the shore:
Beyond the hedgerow I shall see the sea."

THE "WANDERER"

And on the instant from beyond away
That long familiar sound, a ship's bell, broke
The hush below me in the unseen bay.
Old memories came: that inner prompting spoke.

And bright above the hedge a seagull's wings
Flashed and were steady upon empty air.
"A Power unseen," I cried, "prepares these things;
"Those are her bells, the *Wanderer* is there."

So, hurrying to the hedge and looking down,
I saw a mighty bay's wind-crinkled blue
Ruffling the image of a tranquil town,
With lapsing waters glittering as they grew.

And near me in the road the shipping swung,
So stately and so still in such great peace
That like to drooping crests their colours hung,
Only their shadows trembled without cease.

I did but glance upon those anchored ships.
Even as my thought had told, I saw her plain;
Tense, like a supple athlete with lean hips,
Swiftness at pause, the *Wanderer* come again—

Come as of old a queen, untouched by Time,
Resting the beauty that no seas could tire,
Sparkling, as though the midnight's rain were rime,
Like a man's thought transfigured into fire.

THE "WANDERER"

And as I looked, one of her men began
To sing some simple tune of Christmas day;
Among her crew the song spread, man to man,
Until the singing rang across the bay;

And soon in other anchored ships the men
Joined in the singing with clear throats, until
The farm-boy heard it up the windy glen,
Above the noise of sheep-bells on the hill.

Over the water came the lifted song—
Blind pieces in a mighty game we swing;
Life's battle is a conquest for the strong;
The meaning shows in the defeated thing.

AUGUST, 1914

How still this quiet cornfield is to-night!
By an intenser glow the evening falls,
Bringing, not darkness, but a deeper light;
Among the stooks a partridge covey calls.

The windows glitter on the distant hill;
Beyond the hedge the sheep-bells in the fold
Stumble on sudden music and are still;
The forlorn pinewoods droop above the wold.

An endless quiet valley reaches out
Past the blue hills into the evening sky;
Over the stubble, cawing, goes a rout
Of rooks from harvest, flagging as they fly.

So beautiful it is, I never saw
So great a beauty on these English fields,
Touched by the twilight's coming into awe,
Ripe to the soul and rich with summer's yields.

*   *   *   *   *

These homes, this valley spread below me here,
The rooks, the tilted stacks, the beasts in pen,
Have been the heartfelt things, past-speaking dear
To unknown generations of dead men,

AUGUST, 1914

Who, century after century, held these farms,
And, looking out to watch the changing sky,
Heard, as we hear, the rumours and alarms
Of war at hand and danger pressing nigh.

And knew, as we know, that the message meant
The breaking off of ties, the loss of friends,
Death, like a miser getting in his rent,
And no new stones laid where the trackway ends.

The harvest not yet won, the empty bin,
The friendly horses taken from the stalls,
The fallow on the hill not yet brought in,
The cracks unplastered in the leaking walls.

Yet heard the news, and went discouraged home,
And brooded by the fire with heavy mind,
With such dumb loving of the Berkshire loam
As breaks the dumb hearts of the English kind,

Then sadly rose and left the well-loved Downs,
And so by ship to sea, and knew no more
The fields of home, the byres, the market towns,
Nor the dear outline of the English shore,

But knew the misery of the soaking trench,
The freezing in the rigging, the despair
In the revolting second of the wrench
When the blind soul is flung upon the air,

AUGUST, 1914

And died (uncouthly, most) in foreign lands
For some idea but dimly understood
Of an English city never built by hands
Which love of England prompted and made good.

*　　*　　*　　*　　*

If there be any life beyond the grave,
It must be near the men and things we love,
Some power of quick suggestion how to save,
Touching the living soul as from above.

An influence from the Earth from those dead hearts
So passionate once, so deep, so truly kind,
That in the living child the spirit starts,
Feeling companioned still, not left behind.

Surely above these fields a spirit broods
A sense of many watchers muttering near
Of the lone Downland with the forlorn woods
Loved to the death, inestimably dear.

A muttering from beyond the veils of Death
From long-dead men, to whom this quiet scene
Came among blinding tears with the last breath,
The dying soldier's vision of his queen.

All the unspoken worship of those lives
Spent in forgotten wars at other calls
Glimmers upon these fields where evening drives
Beauty like breath, so gently darkness falls.

AUGUST, 1914

Darkness that makes the meadows holier still,
The elm-trees sadden in the hedge, a sigh
Moves in the beech-clump on the haunted hill,
The rising planets deepen in the sky,

And silence broods like spirit on the brae,
A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight runs
Over the grasses of the ancient way
Rutted this morning by the passing guns.

BIOGRAPHY

When I am buried, all my thoughts and acts
Will be reduced to lists of dates and facts,
And long before this wandering flesh is rotten
The dates which made me will be all forgotten;
And none will know the gleam there used to be
About the feast-days freshly kept by me,
But men will call the golden hour of bliss
"About this time," or "shortly after this."

Men do not heed the rungs by which men climb
Those glittering steps, those milestones upon Time,
Those tombstones of dead selves, those hours of birth,
Those moments of the soul in years of earth.
They mark the height achieved, the main result,
The power of freedom in the perished cult,
The power of boredom in the dead man's deeds,
Not the bright moments of the sprinkled seeds.

By many waters and on many ways
I have known golden instants and bright days;
The day on which, beneath an arching sail,
I saw the Cordilleras and gave hail;

BIOGRAPHY

The summer day on which in heart's delight
I saw the Swansea Mumbles bursting white ;
The glittering day when all the waves wore flags,
And the ship *Wanderer* came with sails in rags ;
That curlew-calling time in Irish dusk,
When life became more splendid than its husk,
When the rent chapel on the brae at Slains
Shone with a doorway opening beyond brains ;
The dawn when, with a brace-block's creaking cry,
Out of the mist a little barque slipped by,
Spilling the mist with changing gleams of red,
Then gone, with one raised hand and one turned head ;
The howling evening when the spindrift's mists
Broke to display the Four Evangelists,
Snow-capped, divinely granite, lashed by breakers,
Wind-beaten bones of long since buried acres ;
The night alone near water when I heard
All the sea's spirit spoken by a bird ;
The English dusk when I beheld once more
(With eyes so changed) the ship, the citied shore,
The lines of masts, the streets so cheerly trod
(In happier seasons), and gave thanks to God.
All had their beauty, their bright moments' gift,
Their something caught from Time, the ever-swift.

All of those gleams were golden ; but life's hands
Have given more constant gifts in changing lands,
And when I count those gifts, I think them such
As no man's bounty could have bettered much

BIOGRAPHY

The gift of country life, near hills and woods,
Where happy waters sing in solitudes;
The gift of being near ships, of seeing each day
A city of ships with great ships under weigh;
The great street paved with water, filled with shipping,
And all the world's flags flying and seagulls dipping.

Yet when I am dust my penman may not know
Those water-trampling ships which made me glow,
But think my wonder mad and fail to find
Their glory, even dimly, from my mind,
And yet they made me. Not alone the ships,
But men hard-palmed from tallying-on to whips,
The two close friends of nearly twenty years,
Sea-followers both, sea-wrestlers and sea-peers,
Whose feet with mine wore many a bolthead bright
Treading the decks beneath the riding light.
Yet death will make that warmth of friendship cold,
And who'll know what one said and what one told
Our hearts' communion and the broken spells
When the loud call blew at the strike of bells?
No one, I know, yet let me be believed,
A soul entirely known is life achieved.

Years blank with hardship never speak a word,
Live in the soul to make the being stirred;
Towns can be prisons, where the spirit dulls
Away from mates and ocean-wandering hulls,

BIOGRAPHY

Away from all bright water and great hills
And sheep-walks, where the curlews cry their fills;
Away in towns, where eyes have nought to see
But dead museums and miles of misery,
And floating life unrooted from man's need,
And miles of fish-hooks baited to catch greed,
And life made wretched out of human ken,
And miles of shopping women served by men.
So, if the penman sums my London days,
Let him but say that there were holy ways,
Dull Bloomsbury streets of dull brick mansions old,
With stinking doors, where women stood to scold,
And drunken waits at Christmas with their horn,
Droning the news, in snow, that Christ was born ;
And windy gas-lamps and the wet roads shining,
And that old carol of the midnight whining,
And that old room (above the noisy slum),
Where there was wine and fire and talk with some
Under strange pictures of the wakened soul,
To whom this earth was but a burnt-out coal.

O Time, bring back those midnights and those friends,
Those glittering moments that a spirit lends,
That all may be imagined from the flash,
The cloud-hid god-game through the lightning gash,
Those hours of stricken sparks from which men took
Light to send out to men in song or book.
Those friends who heard St. Pancras's bells strike two
Yet stayed until the barber's cockerel crew,

BIOGRAPHY

Talking of noble styles, the Frenchman's best,
The thought beyond great poets not expressed,
The glory of mood where human frailty failed,
The forts of human light not yet assailed,
Till the dim room had mind, and seemed to brood,
Binding our wills to mental brotherhood,
Till we became a college, and each night
Was discipline and manhood and delight,
Till our farewells, and winding down the stairs
At each grey dawn had meaning that Time spares,
That we, so linked, should roam the whole world round
Teaching the ways our brooding minds had found,
Making that room our Chapter, our one mind,
Where all that this world soiled should be refined.

Often at night I tread those streets again,
And see the alley glimmering in the rain ;
Yet now I miss that sign of earlier tramps,
A house with shadows of plane-boughs under lamps
The secret house where once a beggar stood
Trembling and blind to show his wce for food.
And now I miss that friend who used to walk
Home to my lodgings with me, deep in talk,
Wearing the last of night out in still streets
Trodden by us and policemen on their beats
And cats, but else deserted. Now I miss
That lively mind and guttural laugh of his,
And that strange way he had of making gleam,
Like something real, the art we used to dream.

BIOGRAPHY

London has been my prison; but my books,
Hills and great waters, labouring men and brooks,
Ships and deep friendships, and remembered days,
Which even now set all my mind ablaze,
As that June day when, in the red bricks' chinks,
I saw the old Roman ruins white with pinks,
And felt the hillside haunted even then
By not dead memory of the Roman men.
And felt the hillside thronged by souls unseen,
Who knew the interest in me, and were keen
That man alive should understand man dead,
So many centuries since the blood was shed.
And quickened with strange hush because this comer
Sensed a strange soul alive behind the summer.

That other day on Ercall when the stones
Were sunbleached white, like long unburied bones,
While the bees droned and all the air was sweet
From honey buried underneath my feet.
Honey of purple heather and white clover
Sealed in its gummy bags till summer's over.
Then other days by water, by bright sea,
Clear as clean glass and my bright friend with me,
The cove clean bottomed where we saw the brown
Red spotted plaice go skimming six feet down
And saw the long fronds waving, white with shells,
Waving, unfolding, drooping, to the swells;
That sadder day when we beheld the great
And terrible beauty of a Lammas spate

BIOGRAPHY

Roaring white-mouthed in all the great cliff's gaps
Headlong, tree-tumbling fury of collapse,
While drenching clouds drove by and every sense
Was water roaring or rushing or in offence
And mountain sheep stood huddled and blown gaps gleamed
Where torn white hair of torrents shook and streamed.
That sadder day when we beheld again
A spate going down in sunshine after rain,
When the blue reach of water leaping bright
Was one long ripple and clatter, flecked with white,
And that far day, that never blotted page
When youth was bright like flowers about old age,
Fair generations bringing thanks for life
To that old kindly man and trembling wife
After their sixty years : Time never made
A better beauty since the Earth was laid,
Than that thanksgiving given to grey hair
For the great gift of life which brought them there.

Days of endeavour have been good : the days
Racing in cutters for the comrade's praise,
The day they led my cutter at the turn
Yet could not keep the lead and dropped astern
The moment in the spurt when both boats' oars
Dipped in each other's wash and throats grew hoarse
And teeth ground into teeth and both strokes quickened

Lashing the sea, and gasps came, and hearts
    sickened
And coxswains damned us, dancing, banking stroke,
To put our weights on, though our hearts were broke
And both boats seemed to stick and sea seemed
    glue,
The tide a mill-race we were struggling through
And every quick recover gave us squints
Of them still there and oar tossed water-glints,
And cheering came, our friends, our foemen cheering,
A long, wild, rallying murmur on the hearing
"Port Fore!" and "Starboard Fore!" "Port Fore!"
    "Port Fore!"
"Up with her, Starboard," and at that each oar
Lightened, though arms were bursting, and eyes
    shut
And the oak stretchers grunted in the strut
And the curse quickened from the cox, our bows
Crashed, and drove talking water, we made vows,
Chastity vows and temperance; in our pain
We numbered things we'd never eat again
If we could only win; then came the yell
"Starboard," "Port Fore," and then a beaten bell
Rung as for fire to cheer us. "Now." Oars bent
Soul took the looms now body's bolt was spent,
"Give way, come on now!" "On now!" "On now!"
    "Starboard."
"Port Fore!" "Up with her, Port!" each cutter
    harboured

Ten eye-shut painsick strugglers, "Heave, oh,
heave!"
Catcalls waked echoes like a shrieking sheave.
"Heave!" and I saw a back, then two. "Port Fore."
"Starboard!" "Come on!" I saw the midship oar
And knew we had done them. "Port Fore!" "Starboard!" "Now!"
I saw bright water spurting at their bow
Their cox' full face an instant. They were done.
The watchers' cheering almost drowned the gun.
We had hardly strength to toss our oars; our cry
Cheering the losing cutter was a sigh.

Other bright days of action have seemed great:
Wild days in a pampero off the Plate;
Good swimming days, at Hog Back or the Coves
Which the young gannet and the corbie loves;
Surf-swimming between rollers, catching breath
Between the advancing grave and breaking death,
Then shooting up into the sunbright smooth
To watch the advancing roller bare her tooth,
And days of labour also, loading, hauling;
Long days at winch or capstan, heaving, pawling;
The days with oxen, dragging stone from blasting,
And dusty days in mills, and hot days masting.
Trucking on dust-dry deckings smooth like ice,
And hunts in mighty wool-racks after mice;
Mornings with buckwheat when the fields did blanch
With White Leghorns come from the chicken ranch.

BIOGRAPHY

Days near the spring upon the sunburnt hill,
Plying the maul or gripping tight the drill.
Delights of work most real—delights that change
The headache life of towns to rapture strange
Not known by townsmen, nor imagined; health
That puts new glory upon mental wealth
And makes the poor man rich. But that ends, too,
Health with its thoughts of life; and that bright view,
That sunny landscape from life's peak, that glory,
And all a glad man's comments on life's story,
And thoughts of marvellous towns and living men,
And what pens tell and all beyond the pen,
End, and are summed in words so truly dead,
They raise no image of the heart and head,
The life, the man alive, the friend we knew,
The mind ours argued with or listened to,
None; but are dead, and all life's keenness, all,
Is dead as print before the funeral,
Even deader after, when the dates are sought,
And cold minds disagree with what we thought.

This many pictured world of many passions
Wears out the nations as a woman fashions,
And what life is is much to very few,
Men being so strange, so mad, and what men do
So good to watch or share; but when men count
Those hours of life that were a bursting fount,
Sparkling the dusty heart with living springs,
There seems a world, beyond our earthly things,

BIOGRAPHY

Gated by golden moments, each bright time
Opening to show the city white like lime,
High-towered and many-peopled. This made sure,
Work that obscures those moments seems impure,
Making our not-returning time of breath
Dull with the ritual and records of death,
That frost of fact by which our wisdom gives
Correctly stated death to all that lives.

Best trust the happy moments. What they gave
Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,
And gives his work compassion and new eyes,
The days that make us happy make us wise.

SONG

One sunny time in May
When lambs were sporting,
The sap ran in the spray
And I went courting,
And all the apple-boughs
Were bright with blossom,
I picked an early rose
For my love's bosom.

And then I met her friend,
Down by the water,
Who cried, "She's met her end,
That grey-eyed daughter,
That voice of hers is stilled.
Her beauty broken."
Oh, me! my love is killed,
My love unspoken.

She was too sweet, too dear,
To die so cruel.
O Death, why leave me here
And take my jewel?

SONG

Her voice went to the bone,
So true, so ringing,
And now I go alone
Winter or springing.

SHIPS

I CANNOT tell their wonder nor make known
Magic that once thrilled through me to the bone,
But all men praise some beauty, tell some tale,
Vent a high mood which makes the rest seem pale,
Pour their heart's blood to flourish one green leaf,
Follow some Helen for her gift of grief,
And fail in what they mean, whate'er they do:
You should have seen, man cannot tell to you
The beauty of the ships of that my city.

That beauty now is spoiled by the sea's pity:
For one may haunt the pier a score of times
Hearing St. Nicholas' bells ring out the chimes,
Yet never see those proud ones swaying home,
With mainyards backed and bows a cream of foam,
Those bows so lovely-curving, cut so fine
Those coulters of the many-bubbled brine,
As once, long since, when all the docks were filled
With that sea beauty man has ceased to build.

Yet though their splendour may have ceased to be,
Each played her sovereign part in making me;

SHIPS

Now I return my thanks with heart and lips
For the great queenliness of all those ships.

And first the first bright memory, still so clear,
An autumn evening in a golden year,
When in the last lit moments before dark
The *Chepica,* a steel-gray lovely barque,
Her trucks aloft in sun-glow red as blood,
Came to an anchor near us on the flood.
Then come so many ships that I could fill
Three docks with their fair hulls remembered still,
Each with her special memory's special grace,
Riding the sea, making the waves give place
To delicate high beauty ; man's best strength,
Noble in every line in all their length.
Ailsa, *Genista*, ships, with long jib-booms,
The *Wanderer* with great beauty and strange dooms,
Liverpool (mightiest then) superb, sublime,
The *California* huge, as slow as Time.
The *Cutty Sark*, the perfect *J. T. North*,
The loveliest barque my city has sent forth.
Dainty *Redgauntlet*, well remembered yet,
The splendid *Argus* with her skysail set,
Stalwart *Drumcliff*, white-blocked majestic *Sierras*,
Divine bright ships, the water's standard bearers.
Melpomene, Euphrosyne, and their sweet
Sea-troubling sisters of the Fernie Fleet.
Corunna (in whom my friend died) and the old
Long since loved *Esmeralda* long since sold.

SHIPS

Centurion passed in Rio, *Glaucus* spoken,
Aladdin burnt, the *Bidston* water broken,
Yola in whom my friend sailed, *Dawpool* trim,
Fierce-bowed *Egeria* plunging to the swim,
Stanmore wide-sterned, sweet *Cupica*, tall *Bard*
Queen in all harbours with her moonsail yard.

Though I tell many there must still be others,
McVickar Marshall's ships and Fernie Brothers'
Lochs, Counties, Shires, Drums, the countless lines
Whose house-flags all were once familiar signs
At high main trucks on Mersey's windy ways
When sun made all the wind-white water blaze.
Their names bring back old mornings when the docks
Shone with their house flags and their painted blocks,
Their raking masts below the Custom House
And all the marvellous beauty of their bows.

Familiar steamers, too, majestic steamers,
Shearing Atlantic roller-tops to steamers
Umbria, Etruria, noble, still at sea,
The grandest, then, that man had brought to be.
Majestic, City of Paris, City of Rome
Forever jealous racers, out and home.
The Alfred Holt's blue smokestacks down the stream,
The fair *Arabian* with her bows a-cream.

SHIPS

Booth liners, Anchor liners, Red Star liners,
The marks and styles of countless ship designers.
The *Magdalena*, *Puno*, *Potosi*,
Lost *Cotopaxi*, all well-known to me.

These splendid ships, each with her grace, her glory,
Her memory of old song or comrade's story,
Still in my mind the image of life's need,
Beauty in hardest action, beauty indeed.
"They built great ships and sailed them" sounds most brave,
Whatever arts we have or fail to have ;
I touch my country's mind, I come to grips
With half her purpose thinking of these ships.

That art untouched by softness, all that line
Drawn ringing hard to stand the test of brine ;
That nobleness and grandeur, all that beauty
Born of a manly life and bitter duty ;
That splendour of fine bows which yet could stand
The shock of rollers never checked by land.
That art of masts, sail-crowded, fit to break,
Yet stayed to strength, and back-stayed into rake,
The life demanded by that art, the keen
Eye-puckered, hard-case seamen, silent, lean,
They are grander things than all the art of towns,
Their tests are tempests and the sea that drowns.

SHIPS

They are my country's line, her great art done
By strong brains labouring on the thought unwon,
They mark our passage as a race of men,
Earth will not see such ships as those agen.

SONNET

(From the Spanish of Don Francisco A. Quevedo)

I saw the ramparts of my native land,
One time so strong, now dropping in decay,
Their strength destroyed by this new age's way,
That has worn out and rotted what was grand.

I went into the fields: there I could see
The sun drink up the waters newly thawed,
And on the hills the moaning cattle pawed;
Their miseries robbed the day of light for me.

I went into my house: I saw how spotted,
Decaying things made that old home their prize.
My withered walking-staff had come to bend.
I felt the age had won; my sword was rotted,
And there was nothing on which to set my eyes
That was not a reminder of the end.

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE

(From the Portuguese of Antonio di Ferreiro)

That blessed sunlight, that once showed to me
My way to heaven more plain, more certainly,
And with her bright beams banished utterly
All trace of mortal sorrow far from me,
Has gone from me, has left her prison sad,
And I am blind and alone and gone astray,
Like a lost pilgrim on a desert way
Wanting the blessed guide that once he had.

Thus with a spirit bowed and mind a blur
I trace the holy steps where she has gone
By valleys and by meadows and by mountains,
And everywhere I catch a glimpse of her,
She takes me by the hand and leads me on,
And my eyes follow her—my eyes made fountains.

THEY CLOSED HER EYES

(From the Spanish of Don Gustavo A. Becquér)

They closed her eyes,
They were still open;
They hid her face
With a white linen,
And some sobbing,
Others in silence,
From the sad bedroom
All came away.

The nightlight in a dish
Burned on the floor;
It threw on the wall
The bed's shadow,
And in that shadow
One saw some times
Drawn in sharp line
The body's shape.

THEY CLOSED HER EYES

The dawn appeared.
At its first whiteness,
With its thousand noises,
The town awoke.
Before that contrast
Of light and darkness,
Of life and strangeness,
I thought a moment.
My God, how lonely
The dead are.

On the shoulders of men
To church they bore her,
And in a chapel
They left her bier.
There they surrounded
Her pale body
With yellow candles
And black stuffs.

At the last stroke
Of the ringing for the souls
An old crone finished
Her last prayers.
She crossed the narrow nave,
The doors moaned,
And the holy place
Remained deserted.

THEY CLOSED HER EYES

From a clock one heard
The measured ticking,
And from a candle
The guttering.
All things there
Were so dark and mournful,
So cold and rigid,
That I thought a moment—
My God, how lonely
The dead are!

From the high belfry
The tongue of iron
Clanged, giving out
A last farewell.
Crape on their clothes,
Her friends and kindred
Passed by in line
In homage to her.

In the last vault,
Dark and narrow,
The pickaxe opened
A niche at one end;
They laid her away there.
Soon they bricked the place up,
And with a gesture
Bade grief farewell.

• THEY CLOSED HER EYES

Pickaxe on shoulder,
The gravedigger,
Singing between his teeth
Passed out of sight
The night came down
It was all silent.
Alone in darkness,
I thought a moment—
My God, how lonely
The dead are!

In the dark nights
Of bitter winter,
When the wind makes
The rafters creak,
When the violent rain
Lashes the windows,
Lonely I remember
That poor girl.

There falls the rain
With its noise eternal
There the north wind
Fights with the rain.
Stretched in the hollow
Of the damp bricks,
Perhaps her bones
Freeze with the cold.

THEY CLOSED HER EYES*

Does the dust return to dust?
Does the soul fly to heaven?
Or is all vile matter,
Rottenness, filthiness?
I know not, but
There is something—something—
Something which gives me
Loathing, terror,
To leave the dead
So alone, so wretched.

THE RIVER

ALL other waters have their time of peace,
Calm, or the turn of tide or summer drought;
But on these bars the tumults never cease,
In violent death this river passes out.

Brimming she goes, a bloody-coloured rush
Hurrying her heaped disorder, rank on rank,
Bubbleless speed so still that in the hush
One hears the mined earth dropping from the bank,

Slipping in little falls whose tingeings drown,
Sunk by the waves for ever pressing on,
Till with a stripping crash the tree goes down,
Its washing branches flounder and are gone.

Then, roaring out aloud, her water spreads,
Making a desolation where her waves
Shriek and give battle, tossing up their heads,
Tearing the shifting sandbanks into graves,

Changing the raddled ruin of her course
So swiftly, that the pilgrim on the shore
Hears the loud whirlpool laughing like a horse
Where the scurfed sand was parched an hour before.

THE RIVER

And always underneath that heaving tide
The changing bottom runs, or piles, or quakes
Flinging immense heaps up to wallow wide,
Sucking the surface into whirls like snakes.

If anything should touch that shifting sand,
All the blind bottom sucks it till it sinks ;
It takes the clipper ere she comes to land,
It takes the thirsting tiger as he drinks.

And on the river pours—it never tires ;
Blind, hungry, screaming, day and night the same
Purposeless hurry of a million ires,
Mad as the wind, as merciless as flame.

*   *   *   *   *

There was a full-rigged ship, the *Travancore*,
Towing to port against that river's rage—
A glittering ship made sparkling for the shore,
Taut to the pins in all her equipage.

Clanging, she topped the tide ; her sails were furled,
Her men came loitering downwards from the yards ;
They who had brought her half across the world,
Trampling so many billows into shards,

Now looking up, beheld their duty done,
The ship approaching port, the great masts bare,
Gaunt as three giants striding in the sun,
Proud, with the colours tailing out like hair.

THE RIVER

So, having coiled their gear, they left the deck ;
Within the fo'c'sle's gloom of banded steel,
Mottled like wood with many a painted speck,
They brought their plates and sat about a meal.

Then pushing back the tins, they lit their pipes,
Or slept, or played at cards, or gently spoke,
Light from the portholes shot in dusty stripes
Tranquilly moving, sometimes blue with smoke.

These sunbeams sidled when the vessel rolled,
Their lazy yellow dust-strips crossed the floor,
Lighting a man-hole leading to the hold,
A man-hole leaded down the day before.

Like gold the solder on the man-hole shone ;
A few flies threading in a drowsy dance
Slept in their pattern, darted, and were gone.
The river roared against the ship's advance.

And quietly sleep came upon the crew,
Man by man drooped upon his arms and slept ;
Without, the tugboat dragged the vessel through,
The rigging whined, the yelling water leapt,

Till blindly a careering wave's collapse
Rose from beneath her bows and spouted high,
Spirting the fo'c'sle floor with noisy slaps ;
A sleeper at the table heaved a sigh,

And lurched, half-drunk with sleep, across the floor,
Muttering and blinking like a man insane,
Cursed at the river's tumult, shut the door,
Blinked, and lurched back and fell asleep again.

Then there was greater silence in the room,
Ship's creakings ran along the beams and died,
The lazy sunbeams loitered up the gloom,
Stretching and touching till they reached the side.

* * * * *

Yet something jerking in the vessel's course
Told that the tug was getting her in hand
As, at a fence, one steadies down a horse,
To rush the whirlpool on Magellan Sand;

And in the uneasy water just below
Her Mate inquired "if the men should stir
And come on deck?" Her Captain answered "No,
Let them alone, the tug can manage her."

Then, as she settled down and gathered speed,
Her Mate inquired again "if they should come
Just to be ready there in case of need,
Since, on such godless bars, there might be some."

But "No," the Captain said, "the men have been
Boxing about since midnight, let them be.
The pilot's able and the ship's a queen,
The hands can rest until we come to quay."

THE RIVER

They ceased, they took their stations ; right ahead
•The whirlpool heaped and sucked ; in tenor tone
The steady leadsman chanted at the lead,
The ship crept forward trembling to the bone.

And just above the worst a passing wave
Brought to the line such unexpected stress
That as she tossed her bows her towrope gave,
Snapped at the collar like a stalk of cress.

Then, for a ghastly moment, she was loose,
Blind in the whirlpool, groping for a guide,
Swinging adrift without a moment's truce,
She struck the sand and fell upon her side.

And instantly the sand beneath her gave
So that she righted and again was flung,
Grinding the quicksand open for a grave,
Straining her masts until the steel was sprung.

The foremast broke ; its mighty bulk of steel
Fell on the fo'c'sle door and jammed it tight ;
The sand-rush heaped her to an even keel,
She settled down, resigned, she made no fight,

But, like an overladen beast, she lay
Dumb in the mud with billows at her lips,
Broken, where she had fallen in the way,
Grinding her grave among the bones of ships.

* * * * *

THE RIVER

At the first crashing of the mast, the men
Sprang from their sleep to hurry to the deck;
They found that Fate had caught them in a pen,
The door that opened out was jammed with wreck.

Then, as with shoulders down, their gathered strength
Hove on the door, but could not make it stir,
They felt the vessel tremble through her length;
The tug, made fast again, was plucking her.

Plucking, and causing motion, till it seemed
That she would get her off; they heard her screw
Mumble the bubbled rip-rap as she steamed;
"Please God, the tug will shift her!" said the crew.

"She's off!" the seamen said; they felt her glide,
Scraping the bottom with her bilge, until
Something collapsing clanged along her side;
The scraping stopped, the tugboat's screw was still.

"She's holed!" a voice without cried; "holed and jammed—
Holed on the old *Magellan*, sunk last June.
I lose my ticket and the men are damned;
They'll drown like rats unless we free them soon.

"My God, they shall not!" and the speaker beat
Blows with a crow upon the foremast's wreck;
Minute steel splinters fell about his feet,
No tremor stirred the ruin on the deck.

And as their natures bade, the seamen learned
That they were doomed within that buried door;
Some cursed, some raved, but one among them turned
Straight to the manhole leaded in the floor,

And sitting down astride it, drew his knife,
And staidly dug to pick away the lead,
While at the ports his fellows cried for life:
"Burst in the door, or we shall all be dead!"

For like a brook the leak below them clucked.
They felt the vessel settling; they could feel
How the blind bog beneath her gripped and sucked.
Their fingers beat their prison walls of steel.

And then the gurgling stopped—the ship was still.
She stayed; she sank no deeper—an arrest
Fothered the pouring leak; she ceased to fill.
She trod the mud, drowned only to the breast.

And probing at the well, the captain found
The leak no longer rising, so he cried:
"She is not sinking—you will not be drowned;
The shifting sand has silted up her side.

"Now there is time. The tug shall put ashore
And fetch explosives to us from the town;
I'll burst the house or blow away the door
(It will not kill you if you all lie down).

THE RIVER

"Be easy in your minds, for you'll be free
As soon as we've the blast." The seamen heard
The tug go townwards, butting at the sea;
Some lit their pipes, the youngest of them cheered.

But still the digger bent above the lid,
Gouging the solder from it as at first,
Pecking the lead, intent on what he did;
The other seamen mocked at him or cursed.

And some among them nudged him as he picked.
He cursed them, grinning, but resumed his game;
His knife-point sometimes struck the lid and clicked.
The solder-pellets shone like silver flame.

And still his knife-blade clicked like ticking time
Counting the hour till the tug's return,
And still the ship stood steady on the slime,
While Fate above her fingered with her urn.

*   *   *   *   *

Then from the tug beside them came the hail:
"They have none at the stores, nor at the dock,
Nor at the quarry, so I tried the gaol.
They thought they had, but it was out of stock.

"So then I telephoned to town; they say
They've sent an engine with some to the pier;
I did not leave till it was on its way,
A tug is waiting there to bring it here:

"It can't be here, though, for an hour or more;
I've lost an hour in trying, as it is.
For want of thought commend me to the shore.
You'd think they'd know their river's ways by this."

"So there is nothing for it but to wait,"
The Captain answered, fuming. "Until then,
We'd better go to dinner, Mr. Mate."
The cook brought dinner forward to the men.

* * * * *

Another hour of prison loitered by;
The strips of sunlight stiffened at the port,
But still the digger made the pellets fly,
Paying no heed to his companions' sport,

While they, about him, spooning at their tins,
Asked if he dug because he found it cold,
Or whether it was penance for his sins,
Or hope of treasure in the forward hold.

He grinned and cursed, but did not cease to pick,
His sweat dropped from him when he bent his head,
His knife-blade quarried down, till with a click
Its grinded thinness snapped against the lead.

Then, dully rising, brushing back his sweat,
He asked his fellows for another knife.
"Never," they said; "man, what d'ye hope to get?"
"Nothing," he said, "except a chance for life."

" Havers," they said, and one among them growled,
" You'll get no knife from any here to break.
You've dug the manhole since the door was fouled,
And now your knife's broke, quit, for Jesus' sake."

But one, who smelt a bargain, changed his tone,
Offering a sheath-knife for the task in hand
At twenty times its value, as a loan
To be repaid him when they reached the land.

And there was jesting at the lender's greed
And mockery at the digger's want of sense,
Closing with such a bargain without need,
Since in an hour the tug would take them thence.

But " Right," the digger said. The deal was made
He took the borrowed knife, and sitting down
Gouged at the channelled solder with the blade,
Saying, " Let be, it's better dig than drown."

And nothing happened for a while; the heat
Grew in the stuffy room, the sunlight slid,
Flies buzzed about and jostled at the meat,
The knife-blade clicked upon the manhole lid:

And one man said, " She takes a hell of time
Bringing the blaster," and another snored;
One, between pipe-puffs, hummed a smutty rhyme,
One, who was weaving, thudded with his sword.

THE RIVER

It was as though the ship were in a dream,
Caught in a magic ocean, calm like death,
Tranced, till a presence should arise and gleam,
Making the waters conscious with her breath

It was so drowsy that the river's cries,
Roaring aloud their ever-changing tune,
Came to those sailors like the drone of flies,
Filling with sleep the summer afternoon.

So that they slept, or, if they spoke, it was
Only to worry lest the tug should come:
Such power upon the body labour has
That prison seemed a blessed rest to some,

Till one man leaning at the port-hole, stared,
Checking his yawning at the widest stretch,
Then blinked and swallowed, while he muttered, scared,
"That blasting-cotton takes an age to fetch."

Then swiftly passing from the port he went
Up and then down the fo'c'sle till he stayed,
Fixed at the port-hole with his eyes intent,
Round-eyed and white, as if he were afraid,

And muttered as he stared, "My God! she is.
She's deeper than she was, she's settling down.
That palm-tree top was steady against this,
And now I see the quay below the town.

"Look here at her. She's sinking in her tracks.
She's going down by inches as she stands;
The water's darker and it stinks like flax,
Her going down is churning up the sands."

And instantly a panic took the crew,
Even the digger blenched ; his knife-blade's haste
Cutting the solder witnessed that he knew
Time on the brink with not a breath to waste.

While far away the tugboat at the quay
Under her drooping pennon waited still
For that explosive which would set them free,
Free, with the world a servant to their will.

Then from a boat beside them came a blare,
Urging that tugboat to be quick; and men
Shouted to stir her from her waiting there,
"Hurry the blast, and get us out of pen.

"She's going down. She's going down, man! Quick!"
The tugboat did not stir, no answer came;
They saw her tongue-like pennon idly lick
Clear for an instant, lettered with her name.

Then droop again. The engine had not come,
The blast had not arrived. The prisoned hands
Saw her still waiting though their time had come,
Their ship was going down among the sands,

Going so swiftly now, that they could see
The banks arising as she made her bed ;
Full of sick sound she settled deathward, she
Gurgled and shook, the digger picked the lead.

And, as she paused to take a final plunge,
Prone like a half-tide rock, the men on deck
Jumped to their boats and left, ere like a sponge
The river's rotten heart absorbed the wreck ;

And on the perilous instant ere Time struck
The digger's work was done, the lead was cleared,
He cast the manhole up ; below it muck
Floated, the hold was full, the water leered.

All of his labour had but made a hole
By which to leap to death ; he saw black dust
Float on the bubbles of that brimming bowl,
He drew a breath and took his life in trust,

And plunged head foremost into that black pit,
Where floating cargo bumped against the beams.
He groped a choking passage blind with grit,
The roaring in his ears was shot with screams.

So, with a bursting heart and roaring ears
He floundered in that sunk ship's inky womb,
Drowned in deep water for what seemed like years,
Buried alive and groping through the tomb,

THE RIVER

Till suddenly the beams against his back
Gave, and the water on his eyes was bright;
He shot up through a hatchway foul with wrack
Into clean air and life and dazzling light,

And striking out, he saw the fo'c'sle gone,
Vanished, below the water, and the mast
Standing columnar from the sea; it shone
Proud, with its colours flying to the last.

And all about, a many-wrinkled tide
Smoothed and erased its eddies, wandering chilled,
Like glutted purpose, trying to decide
If its achievement had been what it willed.

And men in boats were there; they helped him in.
He gulped for breath and watched that patch of
smooth,
Shaped like the vessel, wrinkle into grin,
Furrow to waves and bare a yellow tooth.

Then the masts leaned until the shroud-screws gave.
All disappeared—her masts, her colours, all.
He saw the yardarms tilting to the grave;
He heard the siren of a tugboat call,

And saw her speeding, foaming at the bow,
Bringing the blast-charge that had come too late.
He heard one shout, "It isn't wanted now."
Time's minute-hand had been the hand of Fate.

THE RIVER

Then the boats turned; they brought him to the shore.
Men crowded round him, touched him, and were kind;
The Mate walked with him, silent, to the store.
He said, "We've left the best of us behind."

Then, as he wrung his sodden clothes, the Mate
Gave him a drink of rum, and talked awhile
Of men and ships and unexpected Fate;
And darkness came and cloaked the river's guile,

So that its huddled hurry was not seen,
Only made louder, till the full moon climbed
Over the forest, floated, and was queen.
Within the town a temple-belfry chimed.

Then, upon silent pads, a tiger crept
Down to the river-brink, and crouching there
Watched it intently, till you thought he slept
But for his ghastly eye and stiffened hair.

Then, trembling at a lust more fell than his,
He roared and bounded back to coverts lone,
Where, among moonlit beauty, slaughter is,
Filling the marvellous night with myriad groan.

WATCHING BY A SICK-BED

I HEARD the wind all day,
And what it was trying to say.
I heard the wind all night
Rave as it ran to fight;
After the wind the rain,
And then the wind again
Running across the hill
As it runs still.

And all day long the sea
Would not let the land be,
But all night heaped her sand
On to the land;
I saw her glimmer white
All through the night,
Tossing the horrid hair
Still tossing there.

And all day long the stone
Felt how the wind was blown;
And all night long the rock
Stood the sea's shock;

WATCHING BY A SICK-BED

While, from the window, I
Looked out, and wondered why,
Why at such length
Such force should fight such strength.

NOTE

Of the poems contained in this volume, five—"Truth," "August, 1914," "Biography," "Ships," and "The River"—appeared in the *English Review*, one—"The 'Wanderer'"—in *Harper's Magazine*, and three—the translations—in the *Westminster Gazette*. I thank the editors of these periodicals for permission to reprint them here.

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